



NEWS RELEASE

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Helicopter logging starts on Selway Salvage Sale in Idaho County

(Kamiah) – Helicopter logging operations started Wednesday on a burned timber salvage sale in Idaho County that has been at the center of a legal challenge by an environmental group and private individual.

Road construction and logging on the Selway Salvage Sale were put on hold in July because of a judge's order barring equipment access on the only suitable road to the sale area, so the State Board of Land Commissioners (Land Board) approved a modified harvest plan that includes the use of a helicopter to pick up logs instead.

The helicopter is not under contract for firefighting purposes.

Without the legal challenge by Idaho Rivers United (IRU) and Dr. Morgan Wright, the Selway Salvage Sale would have brought in more than \$2 million to the endowment fund that supports Idaho's public school system. Because of the higher cost of logging with helicopters, proceeds from the sale now will be approximately \$630,000 – about \$1.4 million less for Idaho school children.

The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) prepared the sale after the trees burned in the Johnson Bar Fire in 2014. The trees are located on endowment lands, lands that were granted to the State of Idaho at statehood to be managed under a constitutional mandate to maximize long-term financial returns to public schools and other State institutions.

Without harvesting the fire-damaged area and replanting it to generate a new, healthy forest to benefit future generations of Idaho school children, the trees and surrounding forests will become infested with bark beetles and other insects, and erosion will damage waterways in the area, including the Selway River. The sale was prepared by a team of experienced foresters with support from an engineering geologist, fisheries biologist, and forest hydrologist.

In May, IRU joined Dr. Wright in suing the Forest Service to block logging contractors on the IDL timber sale from accessing a Forest Service public road that crosses Dr. Wright's riverfront property. In June, the Land Board and IDL stood by the Forest Service and sought to protect the interests of the endowments by intervening in the lawsuit. When IDL auctioned the sale and announced logging and road construction would begin, the plaintiffs asked the court to grant a preliminary injunction to immediately stop access to the sale. Judge Lynn Winmill granted the request in July.

"Our foresters and team of experts worked hard to get as much benefit as possible for Idaho school children from the management of this burned forest," IDL Director Tom Schultz said. "Even though the check isn't as large as it would have been without the legal challenge, the funds that support Idaho's public schools will still receive more than half a million dollars, and this forest will be given new life after harvesting and replanting."

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